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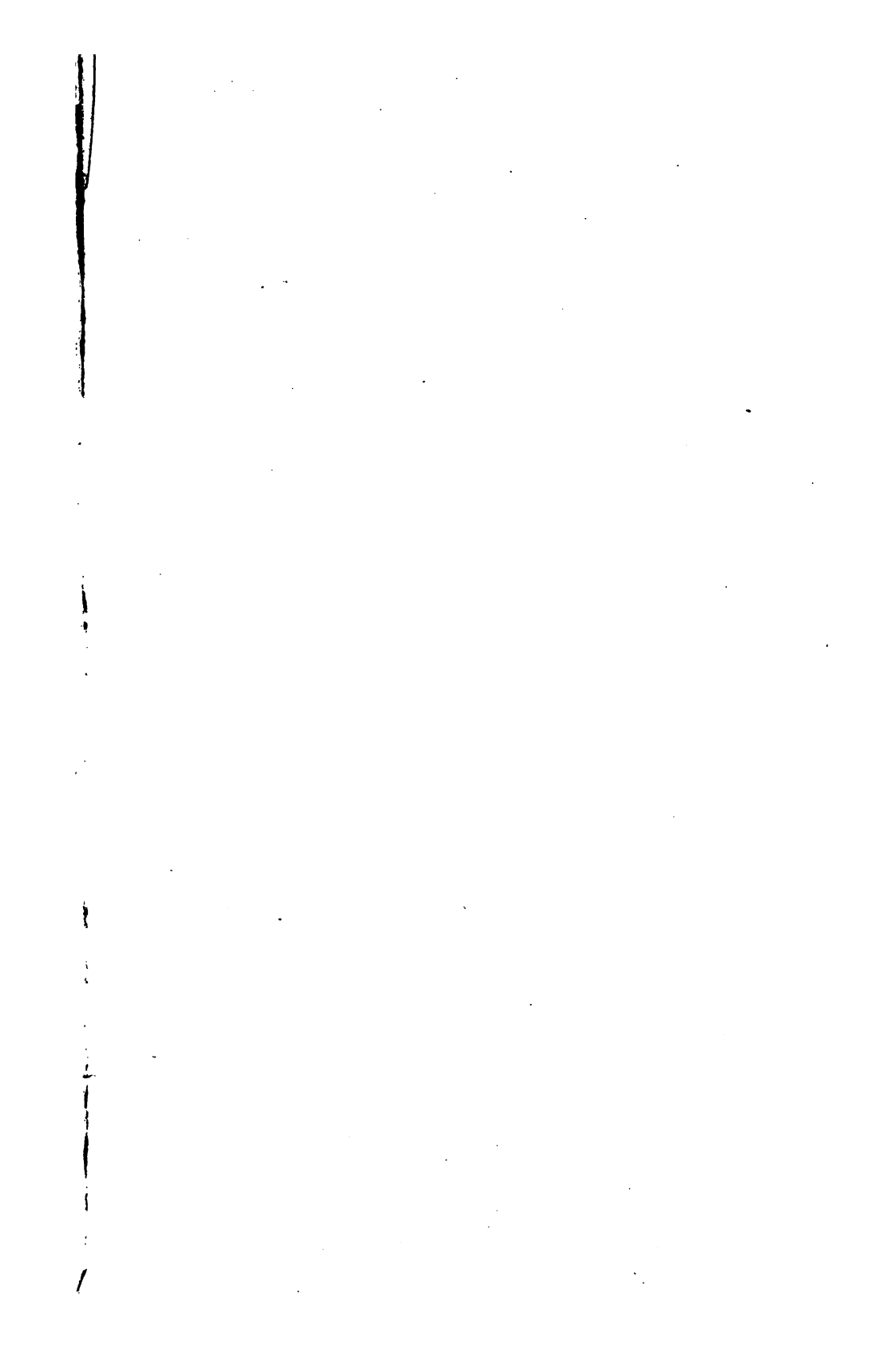
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A

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

OF

THE SWEDISH POET AND GYMNASIARCH,

PETER HENRY LING.

BY

AUGUSTUS GEORGII,

PROFESSOR, LATE LECTURER ON ANATOMY, AND SUB-DIRECTOR AT THE CENTRAL
GYMNASTIC INSTITUTION OF STOCKHOLM, ETC.

*Γινώσκειν δ' ὅμαι τὸ καλῶς, ἰατρὸν ἐόντα,
Καὶ ταῖς ἐννέα δὴ πεφιλαμένον ἔξοχα Μοῖσαις.*

"Full knowledge of the truth I deem is thine
True healer, and beloved by all the Nine."

CHAPMAN'S GREEK PASTORAL POETS.

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PREFACE.

THIS little work is intended to serve the double purpose of guide and corrective—a guide to some knowledge of the aim and limits of Ling's system, and a corrective of certain misapprehensions concerning his character and genius. In a future publication it is my intention to give Ling's Manual such as he left it, which, with the notes and comments I shall add, will, I trust, serve the purpose and merit the title of an "Organon" of gymnastics.

It is highly desirable that the medical profession should be induced to test, and to apply this method of curative movements and exercises. If, in speaking of the hostility Ling encountered, I have felt myself bound to state the facts of the case, I hope that no offence will be taken where none was meant.

It is with great pleasure and gratitude that I acknowledge the kind interest some of the medical body of England have been pleased to take in my success, and the liberal favour Ling's system of gymnastics has met with generally. I am obliged

to a friend for the revision of my English, and for the metrical version of the passages I have quoted from Ling's poetry.

I cannot but express my earnest hope that the system of gymnastics which I recommend and employ, after Ling's teaching, may be fully admitted into the familiar practice of Englishmen, both for educational training and for the relief and cure of many forms of chronic disease. If by my writing, or my practice, I may be enabled in any degree to contribute to this end, I shall be fully satisfied.

A. G.

102, PICCADILLY.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF LING.

EARLY LIFE, 1766—1805.

PETER HENRY LING was born on the 15th of November, 1766, in the picturesque little parsonage-house of Junga, in Småland, one of the southern provinces of Sweden. He was the youngest of six children, and lost his father, the clergyman of the place, in his second year. His mother married the new incumbent, and in that gentleman he found a kind though somewhat stern preceptor, who vainly endeavoured to educate him for the Church. The circumstances of his childhood, his extreme sensibility, joined with singular determination,—an organization he inherited from his mother,—the romantic scenery of his home—wild heath and lonely lake—his mother's death not long after her second marriage, all combined to colour, if not to create, the strange alternations of his after-life.

At an early age he was sent to school at Wexiö, where he soon distinguished himself for his docility, intellectual aptness, and no less for his inflexible temper and tenacity of purpose. A mutiny which broke out in the school cut

short his studies, Ling being expelled, from refusing, out of an honourable motive, to betray the actual culprits. From school he betook himself to the house of his brother, a curate in a neighbouring parish, but when invited to stay he declined, saying, "There is a blot upon my name, and it must be effaced." His brother gave him a silver spoon and his blessing, and Ling began the world. What hardships he encountered, what temptations he mastered, what dangers he survived, this is not the place to set forth ; suffice it to say, in the course of a series of adventures, more or less romantic, ranging from wasteful idleness to the extreme of diligence and thrift, he visited Lund, Upsala, Stockholm, Berlin, Copenhagen, etc., passed his initiatory examination at the first-named university, on the 28th March, 1793, and the same year entered the University of Upsala, which, after passing an examination in theology, he quitted in June, 1799. Once more he set out on his travels, acting now as interpreter, now as teacher of languages, and solving with characteristic fortitude a knot of difficulties, an amusing sample of which appears in washing his only shirt himself, and lying on it till it was dry. After passing through France, England, and Germany, he came to Copenhagen, where he took part in the great sea-fight on the 2nd of April, 1801. But the effects of travel and toil, days spent without food, and now and

then nights passed with little or no shelter, began soon to impair a frame not originally vigorous; he had an attack of rheumatism and paralysis in his right arm, and it then occurred to him to try fencing as a means of cure. The use of his arm he soon recovered, and gained at the same time a thorough mastery of the art. Gymnastics had just been introduced into Denmark by Nachtigall, and received considerable encouragement from the Government; and possibly the idea occurred to Ling of organizing a gymnastic system, with a view to its introduction into his own country, though it seems not improbable that his attention had been drawn to the subject in consequence of the philosophical writings of Montaigne, Rousseau, and Pestalozzi—theories which were practically illustrated in Saxony, where Salzmann, as early as 1786, had founded a gymnastic institution. Of the stormy interval of the next few years we have hints rather than records. Ling himself invariably preserved a strict silence as to this part of his life, though we are not left entirely in the dark. Many of his poems were either conceived or written at this time, and he stored his mind with extensive and various reading. In 1805 we find him at the University of Lund, at once a poet, a lecturer on Norse mythology, a teacher of modern languages, and a fencing-master.

DEVELOPMENT OF HIS SYSTEM, 1805.

Ling's mind was naturally philosophical; he saw in fencing merely the germ of some undeveloped science, the action of a mechanical law, subordinate to a higher physiological law. How was this to be educed and demonstrated, and utilized for the purposes of education? Gradually there presented itself the idea of a gymnastic system in accordance with the cycle of social, political, and moral requirement. Regarding man as a dualistic being, in whom body and soul mutually react, according to the different conditions of their nature, he aimed at the perfection of the organism by means of the combined and harmonious action of these two principles, restoring by his system the equilibrium which either indolence, disease, or a too exclusive cultivation of the intellectual faculties may have disturbed. He had now arrived at the region of therapeutics, and a closer consideration of the laws of motory action enabled him to invent a system of *iatrie* movements, as varied in their character as in their gradations of strength. Directly or indirectly, he contrived means to affect the most hidden internal organs, thereby placing the organism as a whole, or any of its parts, under the influence of a definite and adjusted application

of a principle, the highest and most universal in nature—the application of the *law of motion*. Surveying the physiological phenomena of the human organism, Ling at once observed that the action of certain organs were mainly chemical; the manifestations of others, again, principally mechanical; whilst others, on the contrary, were of a more exclusive mental character: in fact, all partaking in a greater or less degree in some individual manifestation, moral, mental, or physical, and leaving on each action an imprint of the leading phenomenon. He therefore contended that the mechanical agency ought to have a share in the treatment of diseases, proportionate to its importance as an element in the vitality and motory phenomena of the human system, in corroboration of the established physiological fact that the living fibre equally reacts for mechanic as for chemic or galvanic excitation.

The medical system hitherto prevalent had been almost exclusively chemical, confining its attention simply to the secretorial systems. The great preponderance of mechanical action in the vital phenomena, as the principal cause of systemic and atomic motions, had for centuries been overlooked, and, in consequence, the cultivation of one of the most intrinsic agencies for the preservation of health and the cure of diseases had been neglected; I allude to the whole external motorial system, the life of relation, comprising

all those media by which man lives and moves and acts as a human being, which give him form, expressional beauty, and power as the lord of the creation. Hence, and owing to this neglect, results the frequency of decay and deformity, in the place of life and beauty; tottering weakness, instead of elasticity and vigour; lank and ghastly skeletons, or a mere locomotive apparatus of stomach, instead of imposing boldness and the calm consciousness of power, where every muscle has its living development, every part its just proportion, every sense its life-informed instrument; hence, too, the singularly ingenious machinery of stays as a substitute for womanly beauty and healthful elasticity; hence ladies languid on the couch, instead of hardy active housewives, and mothers of a healthy race of men; hence the unsightliness of curvatures and atrophy, instead of the freshness of a Hebe or the maturity of a Juno. But such as the house is, such the master; such as the instrument, such the artist. The inner man, the soul and spirit crippled and bent down by ignorance and prejudice, have been degraded into mere slaves of fashion and the puppets of sensual pleasure. Under this *regime* where shall we find a counterpart for man, as portrayed in the noble outlines of Shakespeare? "What a piece of work is man! How noble in reason—how infinite in faculty! In form and moving, how express and admirable! In action,

how like an angel—in apprehension, how like a god !”

But let the laws of the Creator be once understood, let the laws of exercise and progressive development be duly recognised, and equilibrium in the organic and related life established, let the principle of love and wisdom inherent in man’s spiritual nature once gain an ascendancy in his thoughts and actions, and the earth will be gladdened with the sight of a being pure and harmonious, and clad with power, realizing the truth of those heavenly words, “So God created man *in His own image*, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them.”

It has been already stated what was the cause of Ling’s attention being first drawn to gymnastics. In addition to this he had a continual motive urging him to the discovery of a curative power which might be efficacious against pulmonary disease; an affection of which his mother died, and to which it was expected, at an early period of his life, he would himself, of necessity, fall a victim. A process of observation on the effects of certain movements convinced him of the superiority of the agency he was experimenting upon. Certain movements, for instance, he observed created giddiness, others caused vomiting, others increased the animal heat, even to a high degree of perspiration; while, on the contrary, others produced a sensation of

cold. Again, by a different class of movements, the action of the pulse could be raised considerably, even in the course of a minute, whilst other actions diminished its rate. Violent bodily exertion causes languor, perspiration, restlessness, fever, and sometimes faintness, whilst gentle and moderate exercise induces and promotes vivacity, appetite, and sleep. "Though most of these results," as Ling says, "are generally known, even to the ignorant, professional men, notwithstanding, have bestowed on them no notice, their attention having been entirely preoccupied by chemicals."

Following the system of philosophical induction, by which alone truth can become at once universal and practical, Ling summed up the result of his experiments on the motory phenomena of the human organism in the following expressive propositions:—"To render any movement definite and exact, a point of departure, a point of termination, and the line through which the body or any of its parts must pass, are to be clearly and severally determined, as well as the velocity and rhythm of the motory act itself." In this manner, on a similar principle to acoustic phenomena in music, can the various shades and degrees of real and apparent motion of the human body be ascertained and analysed, mechanically, physiologically, and anatomically. When the time comes for harmonious bodily movements to

be appreciated, the importance of this proposition will at once establish the rank of Ling as a true philosopher. Every organ and texture can accordingly be placed directly or indirectly under a regulated and defined influence of mechanical stimulus, devised in the most varied forms of motion, either *communicated* (passive movements)—consisting of *pressure, friction, "kneading," vibration, percussion, ligatures*, etc.—or *voluntary* (active movements), consisting of *flexion, extension, torsion, rotation*, etc. These movements are nothing less than living anatomy demonstrated mechanically, through the most complete instrument—the animal mechanics of the human organism. The relative position and mutual action and reaction between the operator and the patient being well defined in each movement, a certain and invariable *modus agendi* in the application of these exercises has been invented by Ling, on most careful and elaborate deductions. Surgically speaking, each movement may be regarded as neither more nor less than an operation, *minus* the scalpel, hemorrhage, and pain, though requiring the same care, accuracy, and study.

In the words of a physician, a witty reviewer of this system—"There are thus languages of *nudges*, to remind brain, liver, spleen, and all the organs, of their neglected duties. The effects produced approve the plan, and stamp it as an art and science. It is exercise, contact, admonition, pursued

into details, whereby disease is literally for the first time *handled*. One important general truth which accrues from it is, that operations from without are propagated inward, and that by scientific knowledge you can send in messages to particular parts, which are received and heard just where they are wanted, and nowhere else. Now here is a way of precise gunnery, of hitting disease with precision. This practice recognises motion for the first time as an important element in the human frame, and throws the chemical and molecular views, which are dead and chaotic, into the background, bringing forward the physical and mechanical, which are large enough to be living, and founding upon them a method of curation. It is remarkable that this laying hold of the mobility of the frame comes also from a Swede, Ling the poet, just as the demonstration that the body lives in motion, and that the lungs give that motion, was the gain of another Swede, viz., Swedenborg, and indeed formed the main truth of his physiological perceptions. The latter I regard as the greatest principle of intelligence which has yet been put into the body; perhaps the former may turn out to be one of the most vital of the curative arts.”*

From the principles above mentioned, referring to time and space, can be evolved and tested the entire range of physiological and therapeutical

movements to an almost unlimited extent, each movement being determined according to its *educational, therapeutical, military, or æsthetic* aspect, the four subdivisions of Ling's gymnastical system. In proportion as any organ is exercised, is its strength and vitality developed and sustained; and this law duly recognised and systematically acted upon, the great merits of rational gymnastics, and its rank amongst other exact practical sciences, become self-evident. To ascertain what is the most perfect equilibrium in the human organism, to discover each deflection or discord in the machinery, to apply the due amount of action, to localize it where it is fit, and not to omit an especial reference to individual constitutional requirement, are the objects which Ling proposed to himself, and which his system enabled him perfectly to satisfy. Nay, he goes still further; by applying his art so as to embrace military and national training, he not only economises and concentrates a nation's resources, but raises up in every citizen he trains an effective and self-reliant defender of his country. No better example of what a good citizen ought to be can be found than in Ling himself. His courage to grapple with prejudices and endure self-denials was only equalled by the warmth of his patriotism; his perseverance only exceeded by his capacity for exertion.

•At this period his exertions were incredible.

Several hours each day were spent in giving lessons or lectures at Lund; then twice a week he walked about twelve miles to Malmö and back, where he had been invited to lecture; besides which he entered with his usual ardour upon the study of anatomy and physiology. The estimate he set upon these sciences he thus expresses:—"Anatomy, that sacred science which shows us the masterpiece of the Creator, which teaches us at the same time how small and wonderful man is, ought to form the constant study and contemplation of the gymnast. But he ought not to consider the organs of the body as lifeless forms of a mechanical mass, but as living in every point, and thus an ever-active instrument of the soul."

In Christianstadt and in Gottenburg, during the vacations at Lund, in consequence of a special invitation, he lectured on his system, and proved its utility and practical value. Among the students especially he found numerous followers and partisans, as with the eloquence of a poet he pictured to them mankind restored to pristine health and beauty. His models and ideas were generally selected from the old heroes of Scandinavian history, and comparing their vigour and perseverance, their virtues and self-denials, their manliness and patriotism, with the enervating habits of their degenerate posterity, he assailed with relentless sarcasm the effects of the false

and perverse education then prevalent. Remembering the high importance attached by the Greeks and Romans to gymnastics as an educational apparatus, recalling the permanent influence they exerted on the life and character of those people, Ling was anxious to obtain a similar recognition and secure similar benefits by means of the legislature of his own country. With this view he removed to Stockholm, and succeeded, after some exertion, in introducing his system of pedagogic and military gymnastics into the Military Academy at Carlberg, in the neighbourhood of the capital. An appeal he made about this time to the Government was likewise successful; though a less sanguine temperament would have been daunted by the answer he received from Count von Engeström, the then Minister of State, to whom he applied for governmental support. "We have enough of rope-dancers and acrobats," replied the official, "without burdening the state with their support." Notwithstanding, after repeated solicitations in 1813, a sum of money was granted for establishing a Central Institution at Stockholm, with a view to develop and disseminate his theory.

Henceforward Ling's occupation was defined; here he incessantly laboured, not merely adducing arguments, but verifying by actual fact the harmony existing between his doctrines and the great laws of nature. Accordingly, pupils flocked into his

school; his theory gradually began to win acceptance, and finally patronage. Still Ling did not relax—*nil reputans actum si quid superesset agendum*. He was not only anxious that his school should have a local or isolated influence, he wished to make it a normal institution. He claimed for his science a place in general education, and hoped to restore gymnastics to the rank in medicine they occupied in the days of Plato, and under the direct guidance of a Hippocrates and a Galen. Against empty theorising and practice, apart from principle, he equally revolted. "Theory," said he, "without practical skill, is a spirit without a body; practical skill without theory, is a body without a spirit—a mere animate corpse; just as theory without practice is only a kind of vulgar criticism, spying the mote in one's brother's eye, but lacking the power to detect the beam in our own." So thoroughly was he bent upon the success of the Institution, that, with a rare and noble disinterestedness, he constantly refused to allow the little salary of 500 rix dollars (not quite £40) he received as director, to be increased, preferring that the surplus proceeds should be devoted to the enlargement of the Institution. In fact, it was the one great object of his life; he never quitted it, and never omitted, directly or indirectly, to urge on the Government its support. Support it certainly did receive at various periods, but it

was not till after Ling was dead, and the results of his exertions were undeniable, that the staff of professors and their salaries were somewhat more proportionately increased.

LITERARY OCCUPATIONS AND LATTER DAYS.

To Ling, this tardy recognition and apathetic support from the great majority of his contemporaries was a source of sore disappointment. He had sacrificed health, ease, comfort, in a measure life, and certainly genius, in support of his doctrines, and he only saw a little sparkle of result out of such a hard mass of labour. Still he did not despair, "nor bate a jot of heart or hope;" he felt the nucleus of a system was formed, and whether the world chose to appreciate his efforts or not at the moment, he had no misgivings as to the ultimate result.

At the present moment there are thousands of his countrymen, of every class, age, and denomination, who can bear witness to the great value of his medical and hygienic gymnastics. In foreign countries also his system is beginning to be appreciated, and measures adopted for its propagation. According to a distinguished French traveller, of considerable eminence in the scientific world, "Stockholm deserves to be visited, if only on account of its gymnastics." But in Ling's lifetime the case was different. Honours, to be sure,

he received, and marks of royal favour, but flattering as they might be considered, no man was ever so careless or so uniformly indifferent about them. The dignity of Professor and the order of the North Star were several times offered to him before he could be induced to accept them; nor was it till after his diploma was sent him by the Crown Prince that he acquiesced. On occasions when custom demanded that he should wear his decoration, it was not rarely his practice to carry it in his waistcoat-pocket, and produce it only when asked for. On one of his visits to the Court, when questioned by the present king, then Crown Prince, why he remained in the background, he replied, pointing to the stove, "My Prince, I prefer to be like this,—to spread heat and warmth without being observed." But compliments of a much more gratifying kind were not wanting. After a course of lectures on Norse mythology, at Stockholm, Ling was agreeably surprised by being presented, in 1821, in a large assembly of his old and young friends, pupils and admirers, with a medal struck in his honour, representing his likeness on one side, and on the other the harp of Bragé, with other suitable emblems, and an inscription in Runic characters. "I happened," says Atterbom,* "to be one of those present, among whom there were none he had not either trained into suppleness or endowed

* Inaugural Speech in the Swedish Academy.

with manliness and power; none whom he had not delivered from bodily infirmity or organic decay; none whom he had not charmed with his words, or delighted with his lays—

“‘On the folk that thronged forth to the mighty North,
And taught us their runes, their wisdom, and song.’”*

On the 3rd of June, 1835, he was elected a member of the Swedish Academy, an honour bestowed only on literary celebrities, and, according to custom, made his inaugural speech in honour of his predecessor, General Count Skjöldebrand. The morning the oration was to be delivered, it was discovered that a part of the manuscript was missing. What was to be done? Ling hurried about, inquiring for this *disjectum membrum poetæ*. After a vain search, “Let me sleep for a couple of hours,” said he, “and provide me with an amanuensis.” One was found, and it is not a little singular that the part so filled up is the most brilliant in the whole speech. On being introduced to the Academy, he was received by the celebrated historian Geyer, with the following address:—

“Sir, your admission as a member of this society is a proof that with you, like your predecessor, the culture of the beautiful readily allies itself with manly activity, or rather is nothing

* From “The Asar.”

else. Not in vain did the olden mythologists affix to the attributes of their deities of wisdom and poetry the attribute of courage—for, in fact, there is only one noble courage, which is to live for a noble end; and if every attempt to elevate the soul above the dust is a poem in itself, then not only the poet, but also the sage and the hero, invest their whole lives with the emblazonry of fiction, and this is their chief reward. What can the world offer more desirable? It is the only realization of the beautiful possible on earth. To your mind such a conviction cannot but be familiar; it is innate in you. It has determined the aim of your life; it has stimulated your heart, encouraged you in your trials and troubles; it will follow you to the grave, and be itself a true tutelary genius."

But we have not yet touched upon that aspect of Ling's character to which this speech alludes, an aspect evincing not less originality, and equally remarkable as his love of gymnastics. Not merely in temperament and in thought, but in the vigour of his conceptions, in invention, in outbursts of lyrical power, and wealth of imagery, Ling was every way a poet. In connection with the fact that music formed an indispensable element in the gymnastic education of Greece, and that poetry and philosophy were daily discussed in their gymnasia, it is worthy of remark, as a curious coincidence, that the

reviver of gymnastics in our age was himself a distinguished poet and philosopher, and possessed a keen appreciation of the beautiful in nature and art. The musical faculty he was gifted with in no common degree, and having a delicate and accurate ear and refined taste, was especially partial to the simple though somewhat melancholy melodies of his country. As a reviewer prettily says: "Even his gymnastics had a tinge of poetry, and his poetry in some degree reflected the vigour of the gymnastic art. In his genius there was something that reminded you of Hercules striking the lyre, or Apollo wielding the Herculean club. Commencing his literary career as a lyric poet, he passed over to the drama, and ended with the epos. His lyrics were full of the eloquence of a heart in the dawn and exuberance of life; in the drama, patriotism appeared in the elevated guise of noble diction; in the epos the same sympathies were displayed, ardent to rear a monument for the future on the basis of the past." Had he cared to be simply a poet, he doubtless possessed sufficient strength of wing to carry him to the very highest peak of Parnassus; had he cared to be simply a gymnasiarch, he might have attained a higher scientific development, and filled up in harmonious details what he has only left us in rude outlines. As it was, he lived a prey to two contending elements, which devoured him alternately, and thus on either side

his works lack finish. A great and prolific genius, no doubt, he rather resembled a Flaxman than a Chantrey in the arts he cultivated. Patriotism was the mainspring of all his achievements.

While still at Copenhagen he had sketched various little poems in French, German, and Danish, though they may be considered only as preludes, or exercises in language; one, however, may be particularised, a comedy, in three acts, called the "Misundelige," published in Copenhagen, 1804. At the same time he laid the plan of almost all his dramatic works, which were intended to celebrate the most important epochs and events in Swedish history.

"Eylif, the Goth," is his earliest piece, a poem written in Copenhagen, though not published till 1814. Next in order followed "Agne," a tragedy, of five acts, with its magnificent choruses, the music for which Kapelman, the distinguished musician, composed; although, like almost everything else of his, the work was unfortunately never finished. Mr. Ahlström afterwards set the remainder to music. This is, undoubtedly, the most meritorious of Ling's dramatic works. It was printed at Lund, in 1812, and performed, after the decease of the author, in 1840, on the inauguration of the new theatre at Stockholm. Ling shared the fate of most other Swedish dramatists, and never saw any of his works acted, a circumstance which prevented him from correcting

any of his dramas, with a view to representation. The "Love," an idyl, obtained many admirers, from its consummate harmony and beauty.

The "Gylfe" is an allegorical epic, that name personating Sweden; whilst under the name of Aura, the female lover of Gylfe, Finland is designated; its court warriors, under various titles, representing the different Swedish provinces; Russia being symbolised under the *sobriquet* of the Jotunadrott, Gylfe's enemy, "the Brigand in the mantle green." The poem bewails the loss of Finland, a loss which, though celebrated in song, is perhaps too little felt. Although this work is considered less felicitous, it certainly is not an unfaithful transcript of Ling's national sentiments, for nowhere has he expressed so vigorously his hatred of Russia—a hatred which animated him in his desire to infuse physical no less than moral vigour into his countrymen, thereby preparing them for the conflict with their Eastern neighbour.

The "Holy Bridget," a tragedy, breathes a spirit of deep and heartfelt piety. Of his prose works, "the Symbolism of the Eddas, interpreted for the use of the unlearned," published 1819, sets forth the fundamental principles of the doctrines of the Asar, being a mere transcript of the lectures delivered publicly in 1816; and as a specimen of his style of prose, and an *exposé* of his views on the Scandinavian mythos in

general, an extract from the introduction of this work is here subjoined :—

“ Many of those who admit the true origin and significance of the Eddas, nevertheless demand how it is that these myths possess any deep internal meaning, taking into consideration the rude state of civilization, as well as the situation and climate, of the North. The reply is almost contained in the question. Although the Northman had to grapple every hour of his life hand to hand with want, at a time when the country was little cultivated, though he lived in a land as variable in its natural features as its climate, alternating from wildest heath-tracts to scenes of softest landscape, from a temperature of scorching heat to arctic cold, he was from his very position prevented from expressing himself by painting, music, sculpture, or the drama ; for, unlike the Greeks and Romans, he received no external culture from his neighbours, and the rigour of the climate, at times of feast and tourney, rendered an exposure of the human form utterly impossible for the purposes of the sculptor. Still the Northman, though possessing a free and liberal constitution, proud of his military powers, and famous for the wide-spread emigration of his ancestors, must in some way give vent to his genius. If nature had endowed him with the faculty of philosophy, music, painting, sculpture, or dramatic representation, he would doubtless have

expressed himself by these means, in spite of the lack of fitting material in the country he inhabited. Poetry, then, was the only form left for him, and what he felt and saw he therein embodied. External nature made a vivid impression on his imagination. He made use of strong and allegoric modes of expression, yet lacking that consummate reality which the Southerner so well knew how to impart to his objects by fulness of form. The Northman's poetry could therefore never become what that of the Greek was, and obliged accordingly to assume a lyrical expression, all the multifold powers of his genius could only be uttered by an endless variety of poetical diction, which will account for the circumstance why there never was, and why there never can be, in the literature of the North any pure epos, based on the Greek principle. Every Northern epic poem must necessarily take a development similar to our "Sagas," where the lyrical element constitutes the chief colours and lights of the picture, and the epic only gives substance and outlines to each figure. The fact becomes at once evident by a comparison of works of genius emanating from countries possessed of a distinctive national culture. Eastern poetry, for instance, is luxuriant and alluring, like a full voluptuous woman; that of the Greek sweet and captivating, like some heavenly girl; while that of the Northman is dark and mysterious as the figure of *Vala*, his weird prophetess."

Further on he thus touches on the subject of nationality :—" In all periods, and in all countries, he was only accounted a great man who could think and act for himself. By this standard a community is also to be measured ; it is either self-dependent or it is a mere shadow of others. Why should not the Northman be what God made him—a Northman ? With all deference to other countries and their state of culture, he must learn to be that, if he desire to be anything at all in the opinion of the world. What is a great nation but an aggregate of the men that made her great, and what are great men but a reflex of the national greatness ? This constitutes the magic wand of patriotism—a feeling which must influence every noble heart, which in its turn must feel the fate of its land interwoven with its own nature. And for what are we educated, if not for the community ? Again, what is a community but a numerous family, which has acquired its peculiar temper and its own unmistakable features ? He is therefore a bastard who despises this tie of kindred ; his heart is incapable of any great sacrifice, and his action clogged for any great goal. What kind of friend can he be who professes to be on equally friendly terms with all ? Such is also the case on a larger scale ; the cosmopolitan is the most impassive and impotent of men. I venture to assert that a citizen who is indifferent to the

memories of his forefathers, and who doubts the possibility of re-establishing a national glory, is already half a traitor.

“It never was my opinion that the Northern myths could become universally valid in Europe, or could exclude the Greek mythology. They are as little capable of that as the latter have been able to expel the Asiatic myths from their native abode. I have only asserted that the Northern myths are originally incorporated with our own poetical language; that we cannot reject them in relation to such subjects as exclusively belong to the North; that it is necessary to know these myths, in order to get a thorough knowledge of our history, and that history ought to be known properly, in order to impart a just love for the country. That these myths are as easily intelligible and significant as those of other countries, I hope to be able to show. I know that the visionary attaches too great and the sceptic too little importance to them; either extreme I will carefully avoid.”

Next in order followed “Engelbrecht,” the “Diet of 1527,” “The Sons of Wisbur,” “Blotsven,” “Ingjald Illræda and Ivar Vidfadme,” and “Styrbjörn Starke,” the four last during the course of the year 1827. In addition, he left, in manuscript, sketches, and some complete acts of several tragedies, besides a collection of lyrics. “Charles the Twelfth” was intended to conclude the

series of his dramas, and he used to say, "This will be my last work ; I shall never survive it." "Tirfing," however, or "the Sword of Death," was his last; and curiously enough the event verified an old Saga, which declares that this sword would be the death of its possessor.

"The Asar," his *chef-d'œuvre*, an epic, in thirty songs, would shed a lustre on the literature of any country. In it Ling impersonated all his fervent nationality. It is unequalled for glowing description and bold pictures of northern scenery, the wild and gigantic mountains, roaring rivers, the music of pine woods, and the serene quietude of lakes and valleys. The battle between the Asar and the giants is an instance of Ling's remarkable power. Upon the whole poem, the judgment of Atterbom, his successor in the Swedish Academy, and one of the most distinguished living poets of Sweden, will not be out of place. "Open," says he, "whatever page of it you will, you will always find some beautiful picture of nature, some lyric burst; now a subdued melody, now a wild and dithyrambic strain, beyond all praise." In justification of this eulogium, I have extracted the opening of the first song of the Asar, where Gylfe, the old hereditary king of Sweden, at the epoch of the invasion of the Asar, a Caucasian tribe, is introduced listening to the news of their arrival.

"In the North, where the golden-garbed sun yearly gliding,
 Leads a dance round the hills, on a midsummer's night,
 On his throne, hoar with age, primeval, abiding,
 Sat Gylfe, and uttered his edicts of right.
 White, white as an alp-peak ice-circled, when pass
 Soft kisses of light o'er its gleaming cuirass ;
 And beneath, at its feet, coeval with time,
 Stand pine-trees and firs, pranked with young summer's prime,
 Bowing lowly their summits in meek acquiescence,
 (Though the murmur soughs mild, they withstand not its
 might,)

So, supreme on the hill-top, enthroned sat the presence
 Of silver-locked Gylfe, his eyes flashing light ;
 And thronging around, like a whispering wood,
 A ring of tall forms, his retinue stood."

The following spirited invocation to a ship is
 taken at random from the lyrics which are dis-
 persed throughout the poem.

"Sea dragon, amain !
 Spite of wave and of wind,
 Cleave the air with thy wings ;
 Like an eagle that springs
 From confinement, and wins the large ether again.
 On, on, like a fugitive hind,
 And wild as a forest-pressed bear,
 With thy savage prow tear
 Through the hurtling spray.

Hurrah ! like a cloud in its flight
 O'er the eye of a star ;—
 Fleet, fleet like the shadows, when light
 Breaks dim and afar.
 Now all changes and shifts, and nothing is steady
 But a swift-circling roll, and a smooth gliding eddy ;
 The forest spins round, and the mountain dips under,
 And the distance itself,
 Like a frolicksome elf,
 Fantastical skips aside and asunder.

Now nothing is left but a vast void round,
 That shuts and absorbs in its changeless bound
 The sky and the sea ;
 In a weird embrace, each mingling and blending,
 Like a grave divine, from its womb forth sending
 Each hour death and birth,
 In infinite forms of varying light,
 As swift and as bright
 As the sun-dust wherewith the fays strew the earth.

Speed ! winged sea-horse, at a rapider speed ;
 Thy spray-spattered bow o'er the white billows drive,
 Like an otter that 's hunted ;—struggle onward and strive,
 Like the wing of the gloom
 That envelopes the light.

Wake up the sleep of the monstrous whales !
 And be not appalled and affrighted
 At the ice-floe's crack, as it veeringly sails,
 By the night-sun dismally lighted.
 Speed rapidly on, and undauntingly dash
 Through the din and the roar and the rattle,
 Though the icebergs fall with the ringing clash
 Of swordsmen falling in battle.
 Speed rapidly on, though the sea and the air
 Are riven with lawless noises,
 With the mournful howl of the white sea-bear,
 And the anguish of phantom-voices."

At this time Ling was indefatigable. He might have taken for his motto—*Ohne rast, ohne ruh.**

During the time he was at the head of the Central Institution of Stockholm, and also at the Military Academy of Carlberg, he was obliged to

* "No pause, no rest."

walk daily between these two places, and his hours were so filled up that he seldom found leisure even for his dinner, which consisted of bread and cheese, taken on the road; and he had not often more than ten or fifteen minutes for the distance of some two miles. During these walks he used to ruminate the different parts of his system; and I remember him saying he had mostly completed his theory of military gymnastics in this way.

When occupied on any new subject he never slept; he always had a pencil and paper at his bedside, and had accustomed himself to write in the dark, with the aid of the thumb of his left hand as a ruler. What he wrote was of course copied in the morning. Often, whilst staying at his house, have I found him at my bedside in the middle of the night, with the not over-welcome question, after a hard day's work, "Sir, are you ready to write?" Ideas then poured from him with such rapidity, that it was scarcely possible to transcribe as fast as he wished. It was a great offence to interrupt him. "Write as you hear," would he say; "if it is wrong, I will correct it afterwards." During these periods he took very little food, and was positively rendered ill if prevented from satisfying these needs of his spiritual nature.

Ridderstad, a poet and author of great merit in Sweden, in a letter published last year in one of the Swedish papers, describes, in a graphic and

delightful manner, his interviews with Ling.* “Never,” says he, “shall I forget the vivacity of this excellent man. During a fencing exercise at Carlberg, a dispute had arisen which was the best weapon for a horseman, the lance or sabre; by way of deciding, a fencing match, amongst the military cadets, was arranged on the spot. Lances were distributed to some, sabres to others, and a combat commenced forthwith with the foot soldiers, armed with bayonets. The combatants, as you may suppose, were quite as much interested as the connoisseurs. I had a horse and a lance, though I must candidly confess I was the worst rider of any. My comrades, a good deal more skilful in the art of *manège*, dashed on at a gallop against the bayonet, but they very soon discovered that the danger was far greater than it appeared, inasmuch as, after the first shock, the foot soldier easily mastered and repelled his adversary; my lack of skill made me cautious, so that I approached my adversary at a slow pace, and the conflict was consequently lengthened. In the interval I found, when hard pressed, my lance forced up, as it were, the arm under which it rested, and the lance became easily reversed. On a push, I inferred the head of the lance might be turned to good account as a club. An experiment or two completely convinced me. The final decision, however, was postponed, that Prince Oscar

* Swedish Gazette, August 16, 1853.

might witness it. He came, and among the spectators of course there was Ling. The contest began, and brisk and hot indeed it was; my turn came, and, unlike the rest, I rode slowly. The issue for a long time was doubtful. At last, at a pressing parry of the bayonet, I suddenly retreated, the bayonet turned obliquely, and I reversed the lance, and struck my adversary on the head. He was stunned, and dropped his musket. Ling impulsively rushed to compliment me, while the Prince very kindly turned to look after my fallen adversary. I shall not very soon forget the enthusiasm of Ling on gaining such an unsolicited triumph."

A few months afterwards, Ling then living at his country-house beyond Norrtull, I received an invitation to accompany Wahlbom, the artist, and an old pupil of Ling's, to spend Sunday with him. It was a delightful *réunion*. He spoke with pride of the difficulties he had passed through, the remunerative necessity of labour, and the benefits of a temperate and moral life. He dwelt on his intense love of the clear sky and bright earth, and especially that little plot he called his own—the nook that he had changed from a wilderness into a garden. He then took us to the house he was building, which was doomed never to be completed; for, whenever it seemed to be advancing towards completion, some alteration or other was always deemed necessary. After din-

ner, we went into his study, and he there produced the manuscript of "Asarne," parts of which he read. His voice became animated, his eyes flashed, his forehead became radiant, and he looked at that moment a veritable seer. Suddenly a thought seemed to strike him, and he laid down the manuscript, and rose. Folding his arms, he remained silent for a while. At length he said, "I am old, you are young; I am going to depart this world, you are only entering it; my struggles are at an end, yours are just commencing. I will give you some advice, treasure it up. Be religious. Without fear of God you cannot go through the world; that is the only passport that is available between the cradle and the grave. Be serious. Earnestness sweeps through life like a mighty stream with its current; whereas jest and joke—the buffoonery of witty wickedness—die away like bubbles and foam on the beach. Be persevering. Whatever occupies the mind should be carried out. He who commences with a thousand things, ends with nothing. If a thought or plan enter your mind, concentrate your whole soul on that, and you will soon discover whether it is good for anything. If it be good, do not relinquish it, for in so doing you relinquish your own happiness. Swedes are, in general, not persevering. If we were more so, we should be one of the most powerful people in the world.

"Platen was persevering, and what did he not

accomplish? Notwithstanding all the contumely with which he was assailed, he never swerved from his opinion when once conceived, and now he is honoured by all.* Never lose your courage! You will have to struggle; let not, however, that dishearten, but, on the contrary, embolden and strengthen you. The world is full of frivolity. One aims at this, another at that; and now as ever, the stronger thinks he has a right to force along with him the weaker. But do not suffer yourself to be dragged in any direction. If you are unable, with clear views and firm conviction, to walk by yourselves, then remain where you are; listen attentively to the whispering of the spirit-voice within you. If that has anything to announce it will achieve it, and thenceforth fear nothing. If a man is absolutely in the right, conventionality often prevents him from appearing so in reference to his social condition; and it is for this reason that the conflict of ideas is the most glorious conflict in the world, because the right of society comes off victorious thereby. Accordingly, struggle for what you feel and think. Do not permit any one to check the courage of your soul; on that depends your moral existence. Every conviction must be defended; to allow it silently to be trodden down is cowardice. Lastly, be industrious. To employ every moment prudently, is

* Alluding to the construction of the Gotha Canal, by Count Platen.

to spend every penny prudently. Our only capital is life and time. Laziness is the worst waste I know of. From the highest to the lowest, we are all in each other's service, and we must incessantly labour for each other. Nature works perpetually, as do the elements; the labour of man is, however, the principal, because to that is allotted the arrangement of what the former works.

“Thus spoke the old man; when he had finished he took our hands, and looked at us. ‘To an old man,’ he added, ‘there is on earth nothing so interesting as to contemplate a young man taking his first steps in the world; is it not instructive to the young to see an old man take his last steps?’ Ling again paused, but resumed, after a while, ‘Let us go out to my grave.’ We went. Presently we were standing on a hillock, a tumulus which he had caused to be made on the strand. ‘Have I not chosen a beautiful spot?’ he asked, as he looked with a weary satisfaction on the mound, and the tears in his eyes. ‘Come sometimes hither, and call on me,’ said he, in a low voice; ‘come hither, when I am no more amongst the living. Nature will then, as at present, preach around you the same doctrine. If you listen attentively to her voice, you still may imagine yourselves to hear mine.’”

Simple as his style of living was, the continual restlessness of his nature brought him into pecu-

niary troubles, in consequence of his passion for building and gardening. The little country seat above mentioned, on the shores of the Lake Brunswik, he had fashioned out of a rude farmhouse, and transformed the dreary upland into a park, varied with winding walks and leafy acclivities. Here would he rest after the work of the day, or rather indulge his literary recreations. Seated on a stone or stump he would direct his labourers, or jot down a verse of a new poem.

But Ling was gradually failing, from sheer physical and mental over-exertion, verifying the old Italian proverb, "The teacher is like a candle, which lights others in consuming itself." Still, even up to his last illness, he seldom omitted paying a visit every day to the Institution at Stockholm, either to deliver lectures, or to see his patients. The last visit he paid to the Artillery Academy, at Marieberg, has been thus described by an eye-witness :—"Ling was carried in from the sledge to the lecture-hall, and there divested of cloaks, coats, shawls, scarfs, fur-lined shoes, and other Swedish winter habiliments. Not a word, not a sound was audible, nothing save a low, hollow cough, with which he was much troubled. Such an introduction was not certainly very promising; but after being led to his place, and taking breath for a second or two, he commenced. His voice gradually became animated, his face brightened, and, excepting a certain harshness of

tone, his delivery acquired a considerable warmth and life, to the astonishment of his hearers. Two amongst the young officers (Gripenstedt and Tunelius or Tenger), who took notes together, made at the time some loud observations, with occasional smiles, and Ling, who was somewhat susceptible and irritable, and perhaps suspected want of attention, felt offended. Gripenstedt was summoned to come forth as a model, and in reply to Ling's stern question, 'What is your name?' curtly answered, 'Gripenstedt.' Ironically, and somewhat sharply, Ling replied, 'I have also been a *grip* (broad-sword) in my youth.' Gripenstedt was then requested to assume several different gymnastic postures, with reference to the previous lecture, and, last of all, ordered to take a foil. As the carriage of Gripenstedt, in consequence of his 'free and easy' deportment, appeared somewhat negligent, Ling is reported to have considered it as a kind of defiance, and took up in anger a foil, exclaiming, 'Guard, lieutenant!' With quick eye, vigorous arm, steady foot, the suppleness of youth, and an erect and fine attitude, there stood old Ling, opposite his young antagonist, and in the twinkling of an eye the weapon flew out of the hand of Gripenstedt, with such force that it rolled along the floor.* But at the same moment the

* The reports on the above-mentioned circumstance are conflicting, in so far that trustworthy authorities say that Ling, on

strength of the victorious greybeard was exhausted, his own blade sank, and he had to be led to a chair to rest. 'For four days I have only taken a little bread and butter,' said he, as though angry at his want of strength. Wrapped up in the same heap of over-clothes, he was afterwards carried down to the sledge. This was Ling's last lecture at Marieberg. On the military officers present the spectacle made a deep impression."

On Easter-day, 1839, Ling was laid on his death-bed. To the last, however, he retained his energy. Only three days before I fenced with him, and retired completely exhausted from the lesson. The disease which had slumbered from an early period of his life, now broke out in its full vigour, combined with a liver complaint, and brought about the final dissolution. Now as ever he displayed great resignation to the Divine will, and viewed with calmness the approach of death. As usual, the prospects of the Institution were his chief thought. Most touching is the address he delivered on his death-bed. "Often," he says, "misunderstood, and without means for thirty-five years, I have devoted my life to a subject, without any hope of immediate or ulti-

the occasion, held a foil in *each* hand, and in one sally disarmed both the young and very skilful swordsmen. The exertion required seems also best to agree with the exhaustion immediately ensuing.—*From "Ställningar och Förhållanden."*

mate reward. The King and Diet have assisted me in my struggles from time to time, but my health was unfortunately sacrificed before the hand of encouragement was held out, and even now I have only a few assistants to aid me in the carrying out my original idea. Death is about to put an end to all my activity, and what I have done may vanish like a bubble, should the King and Diet refuse to listen to my dying request, and deny their support to the enlargement of the Institution, according to the scheme I have laid down. Out of nearly a hundred pupils I have endeavoured to educate as gymnasiarchs, there are only two who are able to carry out my true scientific idea, and these two in delicate health; should they depart before others are educated in their place, the real object of the Institution will be lost. Support must come soon, or it will be too late." As his suffering increased he once uttered the wish that, like the old Scandinavian heroes, he might fall on his sword; but a moment after he repeated a verse from the Swedish hymn-book—"Sorrows flee, and e'en afflictions have an end." After having received the sacrament, with his wife and children, he bestowed on each of them, with some affecting comments, the only thing he had to leave—his hearty blessing. His last words were, "God alone is great and good; but we are small, very small, though that we seldom remember."

He died on the 3rd of May, 1839, just sixteen years from the day whereon he had selected a grave, on a woody hill bordering the lake near his house. A little pathway had been cut to the spot; and here he walked many an evening to see the sun set. A stone, like one of the old Runic stones, testifies the love and affection of his friends and pupils, and the simplicity and heroism of his character.

“Long as there lives a kindred in the North
With what is true, and fair, and noble-hearted,
With holy reverence shall his native earth
Visit the grave of her great son departed,
And with the garland of affection just,
Illume his memory and defend his dust.”*

* From Nybon's "Memorial Poem."

In person, Ling was of middle size, though somewhat spare and slender ; his chest was broad and full, and before bowed down by bodily sufferings, his figure particularly graceful ; fair in complexion, with bright grey eyes, and thin and firmly compressed lips, sharp chin, and features of wonderful plasticity, giving a character of thorough determination to his whole aspect, yet mild, gentle, and benignant withal ; he was of the true Scandinavian type.* Those who only knew him in his later years, when, wrapped up in a pile of cloaks, sometimes his own, sometimes his wife's, half blind and bent down, jaded with bodily suffering and mental toil, he limped slowly down the gymnastic hall, can little imagine what a lithe-limbed and active being he was in the earlier part of his life. Times there were, indeed, when inspirited by some favourite topic or auspicious event, something of the old light would sparkle in his eye, and give emphasis to his voice. But these were like autumn radiations, few and of brief duration.

“ In temper,” as a reviewer says, “ Ling was one of those benign yet grave, cheerful though

* There is an excellent likeness of Ling, by Mr. Sandberg, which may be seen in the collection of “ Distinguished Swedish Men,” and a bust of considerable ability, by Mr. Thompson, a Norwegian sculptor.

austere, characters who, with all their fervent love of youth, are the staunch adherents of discipline and order. Accustomed to command at his Gymnastic Institute, and measure distances with the point of the sword, handling men as living but delicate machines, composed of scarcely anything but levers, he was nevertheless bland, cordial, and engaging. Like Socrates, he loved the young above everything;" and in this respect his love was reciprocated. It was delightful to hear the plaudits with which he was welcomed by the schoolboys, whenever he came in to watch their exercises under some of the younger teachers at the Institution, and most cheering to see how heartily they thronged round the old man; he used then to arrange some game or other, in which he took part with the briskness of a schoolboy. As he often said, "I shall be a child as long as I live;" and so he was, notwithstanding the firmness of his character.

In private, he was polite but cool towards strangers; but if his opinion were asked on any subject, or a visitor evinced an interest in his ideas, all his coolness disappeared, his discourse became animated, and the facility of his language, the clearness and originality of his thoughts, at once astonished and delighted his hearers. His mind possessed a power and elasticity altogether unequalled; indeed he always seemed to be struggling with a throng of new

ideas. The fervour with which he defended the beauty and significance of the Northern mythology often laid him open to the charge of enthusiasm. His nationality, in fact, was his life. He would allow no foreign production in his house, nor any foreign material in his dress; he condemned whatever tended to effeminate the mind or mislead the judgment. Nothing was strong enough to express his contempt for instability and weakness of character, whilst purity and manliness he held in the highest admiration. Pride and self-esteem of no small an amount have been urged against him; but if so, these were merely what might have been expected from his antagonistic position. He always took an independent view, and paid little consideration to rank or person. Humble towards the poor, and sympathising with the suffering, sportive and playful with children, he was proud, reserved, and even stern, if he suspected any one were depreciating his science or himself. To a Swedish noble, who desired to see him professionally at his house, as he could not visit the Institution, he replied, "Everybody wants Ling, but Ling wants nobody." On another occasion, we remember him saying to a clergyman, whilst under a course of treatment at the Institution, "Here in this room and at your altar all are equal." His bluntness of manner and disinterestedness were proverbial."

The following anecdote is strikingly charac-

teristic. When even the daily papers commented in no flattering terms upon Ling's gymnastics, especially on their therapeutical application, designating him "charlatan," etc., the then editor of the "Stockholms Post," Captain Lindeberg, discovered a new *sobriquet*, in the term of "gymnastic harlequin." Ling remained apparently indifferent. Some years later Lindeberg was out of health, and in consequence of finding no relief from even the best medical advice in Stockholm, was at last obliged to consult Ling, who, as usual, gave him no promise of cure, but said he would do his best. Within a couple of months the patient was so much improved that he declared himself better than he had been for years; an acknowledgment he made in the presence of all the other patients, when Ling tapped him pleasantly on the shoulder, saying, "Well, sir, the 'Harlequin' is revenged." This anecdote he often related with evident pleasure. An intimacy was the consequence, and when Lindeberg, some years later, introduced Ling's "Agne" on the Swedish stage, the "gymnastic harlequin" was revenged a second time, on this occasion by his old antagonist.

At times meek and childlike, he was firm and unflinching as a rock when he encountered any obstacle. The two extremes of his character may be aptly illustrated by two of his own stanzas—

“Let thy strength wax like a full-spreading tide,
 If e'er by life's ills thou art thwarted,
 There's only one weapon with death can be tried—
 'Tis always to be brave-hearted.*

* * * * *

“In each thought, in each utterance of speech
 Be a child, so the smile
 Of the angels shall reach
 Thee, shall wreath thee the while
 Thy feet tread the earth and thine eyes view the
 heaven.”†

The vigour of his character is still more strongly expressed in the following discourse which he held with a young poet:—

“Thirty years ago, everybody said of me, ‘You are a fool.’ I answered, it is true, but you to a much greater extent, and I will not change places with you.”

“You are fortunate in not being more good-looking than most people are. Were you a handsome fellow, the young ladies would begin to *run after* you, and very soon *run away* with your independence.”

“A free press has an immense power, but with us it has fallen into incapable hands. The sun, under the direction of God, gives light to the world, but directed by others it would only produce a conflagration.”

* Agne.

† The Holy Bridget.

“A young man of talent, who wishes to rise in the world, should not marry, for his home will either become a heaven or a hell. In the first case, he won't leave it; in the second, he won't return to it.”*

“I care little or nothing for the mere form; God's creation cannot be mistaken for the botching of a tailor. If a man is well formed it matters little how the coat fits. When a drawing is finished, who cannot scratch out a blot or two from the pen?”

“Do not believe anybody who tells you this or that line in your poetry is good. Nor again, believe a man who tells you it is rubbish; the whole must be good, and then the parts follow into the bargain. Many praise or dispraise only to let you know they have read your poem, not because they understand you. Let them talk, only don't believe them.”

“I have written ever since I was a child. At twenty-one I had written eleven volumes, but I burnt them; at thirty I was obliged to publish one of my poems, some friends having, without my knowledge, got up a subscription, and I could not honourably refuse.”

The writer of these notes tells us that, on taking leave, Ling said, “Come and see me again,

* Very similar to a passage in one of Webster's plays, “What think you of marriage? As a purgatory—it locally contains or heaven or hell, there is no middle place in it.”

but remember that you will always find in me an old Swede, who does not understand flattery, but who speaks right out. Let nobody prescribe laws for you. An author has only one law, that which is born within him. If you have nothing there, it is in vain to attempt to engraft anything. An author should resemble a tree, with its own root and stem."

In his family relations he was kind but austere, and often hid his feelings under the mask of an apparent roughness. Instinctively alive to the charms of womanly grace and beauty, he touches upon this part of his character in the following prettily-turned sentence :—"Always a warm admirer of the beautiful, he had an especial weakness for the most beautiful in God's creation."* In unison with this sentiment he selected his first wife, a lady remarkable for personal beauty. She died in 1817, leaving only one daughter, gifted with considerable poetical power, and the style of whose writings very much resembles her father's. To her graceful sketch of her father's life we are under considerable obligation. She is married to Dr. Liedbeck, one of Ling's staunch champions and worthy followers. Ling's second wife is still alive, as well as five children. His only living son is at present a teacher in the Institution at

* "Eulogium of His Excellency General Skjöldebrand;" Installation speech to the Swedish Academy, by Ling. Stockholm, 1836.

Stockholm, where he has been thoroughly trained, and well versed in anatomy, physiology, and mathematics, and accordingly is no unworthy exponent of the system.

That Ling believed in an individual existence after this mortal life is proved by his repeated expressions concerning the happiness and perfection of the soul after its trials on earth ; and that he also considered this life as a preparation for a future, purer, and more spiritual existence. Upon theological differences he never argued. "Let every one," said he, "live in the simplicity of his faith." He worshipped the Great Being with the love of a child, submissively and reverently. Notwithstanding an extreme admiration for the divinities of the Norse mythology, he yielded no tardy homage to the high beauties and purity of the Christian religion, which he practically realized in a thousand "little nameless unremembered acts of kindness and of love." Scarce a day passed without some poor and suffering person being rescued, through his mental and bodily exertions. When anybody asked him if he could cure this or that disease, Ling used to answer, "I will try with my *twistings* ; whether they succeed or not depends alone on God."

It now remains to take a brief glance at the effects of Ling's labours. Consider him as you like, as poet, as gymnasiarch, or as lecturer, in his individual capacity or as a member of the

State, he appears equally unique and original. His gymnastic system is peculiarly his own. He had neither Greek nor Roman models to follow. The German system of Jahn, with its high patriotic tendency, as well as the French theory of Amoros, excellent and moral as its elements doubtless are, were the result of a later date, and quite devoid of the universality and scientific stamp which characterise Ling's gymnastics. The Central Institution, the result of his energy and the creation of his genius, is now under the able direction of Professor Branting, a representative than whom none is more admirably adapted, being an acute observer, and a thorough anatomical, physiological, and pathological scholar. If the Swedish gymnastics be an offspring of Ling's genius, it would not possess its present completeness, especially in therapeutics, except for the labours and distinguished merits of this his first pupil. The staff of teachers and their salaries have been increased, and at present the Institution is able to receive about 400 persons daily, of which a considerable number are under treatment for chronic diseases. The theory and practice of gymnastics is publicly taught in conjunction with anatomy and physiology, and every year a certain number of pupils are examined on the teaching and practice of pedagogic and military gymnastics for the public schools of the country.

While to some it may be matter of regret, to

others it will not appear surprising that Ling, leading such a discursive life, and being so impulsive in his thoughts and habits, should have left behind no complete digest of his system. Though he cannot be justly accused of indolence, he was possessed, in common with many other great men, of that procrastinating spirit which postpones to some remote future what is best done and only can be done to-day. "When I get old," said he, in reply to many entreaties on this subject, "then I will occupy myself with gymnastic prose, now let me write poetry." With the exception of a work on pedagogic gymnastics, and a treatise on bayonet-fencing for the army, his "Theory and Principles of Gymnastics" is the only compendium we possess; but this last, a posthumous work, incomplete though it is, is still unequalled as an exposition of the subject, and may justly be considered his "Organon."* What his system is must rather be deduced from his oral teaching, and the recollections of his pupils, than from any actual data. To be sure, the books above mentioned contain potentially the germ of his system; but we can no more judge what it is as a whole, than we can form an idea of a metropolis from a suburb, or of a river from one or two of its springs. It was Ling's hope that a longer term

* To Dr. Liedbeck and myself was intrusted the honour of editing this work, which I hope, at no distant period, to be able to lay before the public, with the requisite commentaries.

of life and usefulness might have been accorded him, and that the Institution at Stockholm might not only be central in name but also in fact; indeed, we have no reason for desponding in this respect. Encouraging symptoms are everywhere apparent, and not the least cheering is, that Professor Branting, by his high attainments and winning manners, enlists every year new adherents to the cause. Not only from Sweden, but from other parts of Europe, physicians are attracted to his Institution, like the Athenians of old to the school of some favourite philosopher. What can Ling teach us? What is the scope and advantage of his system? What is to be expected of movements as a therapeutical and hygienic agency? These are the questions which are anxiously propounded in Germany, France, Russia, and even in England and America.* If

* The following, which has come to hand from a Swedish paper, "The Post and Home News," whilst this work was passing through the press, I cannot let pass unnoticed:—"It is a fact, not devoid of significance," says Professor Branting, "that medical gymnastics, the special discovery and offspring of this Institution, which have encountered so much opposition in their mother country, at the present time, both in and out of Sweden, receive, more than any other branch of gymnastics, the very highest encouragement. In London, St. Petersburg, and Berlin there are several establishments where these gymnastics are used exclusively in the treatment of chronic diseases. In consequence of the lectures I delivered at Vienna, in 1852, at the instigation of several members of the profession, Drs. Steintz, Melicher, and Siegl founded, the same year, three gymnastic curative institutions. In Prague, also in Munich, Dresden, Breslau, Cassel, Halle, Dantzic, Stettin, and Friburg (in

some sneer, and others disdain, these belong to that class of professional Levites and mercenary priests, who have never throughout the world's

Saxony), etc., the medical gymnastics of Ling have been adopted. Dr. Læhr, physician at the celebrated provincial hospital at Halle, has applied Ling's medical gymnastics in mental diseases. The Austrian Minister for the Interior has ordered the use of medical gymnastics at the new hospital for lunatics in Vienna. Dr. Weber, of Giessen, a physician of great learning and experience, having in the year 1852 founded a gymnastic institution on the Swedish principle, insists very strongly in his prospectus on the merits and importance of the Swedish system, and the estimate he himself sets on it is plain from the fact that, after an allopathic practice of more than thirty years, he has come to the determination of devoting himself entirely to the cultivation of the new method.

"Professor Cramer mentions, in his travels in Sweden, that 'since the times of ancient Greece, gymnastics never enjoyed such high repute as the Swedish system now does, in its diffusion throughout Europe.'

"The number of students and patients at the Central Institution during the past year amounts to 828 persons. Amongst them, 15 have passed their examination as teachers of gymnastics for the schools, or instructors in the army; 613 have been instructed in pedagogic gymnastics; and 200 used medical gymnastics for various chronic diseases. During the last summer, as in previous years, several foreign physicians have visited the Institution, for the purpose of gaining practical information in the principles of gymnastics. With this view, a course of lectures on medical gymnastics has been delivered. Besides establishments for pedagogic gymnastics, which exist in Stockholm or the neighbourhood, there are three gymnastic institutions where chronic diseases are treated by movements. All have been full. In the country, only Upsala and Norrköping have the benefit of institutions for the treatment of invalids; but, on the contrary, there are very few Swedish towns where the youth have not the advantage of pedagogic gymnastics."—*Extracted from Professor Branting's Oration, at the examination of the Central Gymnastic Institution at Stockholm, April 28, 1854.*

history cared for aught but their own success and that of their craft.

To understand Ling's position, it is necessary to state the objects he had in view, equally as a poet and as a gymnasiarch. At the opening of his poetic career, the influence of French literature was morbidly predominant in the country; not only French models and laws of criticism were adopted, but it was deemed impossible for truth or beauty to exist out of the pale of those laws. Thus, a national literature, national melodies, and almost a national feeling, were either ignored or derided. Along with a few other young poets, perhaps in consequence of his strong and unsophisticated nature, and keen and quick observation, Ling instinctively recoiled from the exclusiveness, and rebuked the mischief of such influences. With this view a little society was formed, called the "Gothic Bund," the object of which was to liberate themselves from the trammels of the academics and foster a taste for the old Scandinavian Sagas, and so create a national school of poetry and literature. Had Ling limited himself to the fashionable follies of the day, had he pampered the French taste for epigram, or flattered the prurient weakness for amatory lyrics and maudlin pastorals, doubtless he would have saved himself from a torrent of criticism, as unjust as it was untrue to nature. His own feelings and passions he thus poetically

portrays:—"I understand the boldness of my enterprise; but I have ever followed my own bent, and choose rather, like the giant Ymer of old, to be tumbled down by the gods into circumambient space, than, like a reeling Fiolner, to drown myself in the sweet and still water of a mead-butt."

It is with no little surprise that my attention has been drawn to certain remarks which Mrs. Howitt, in her work on Northern Literature, has thought fit to extract from a couple of Swedish critics, respecting the poetical merits and character of Ling. He is there represented as being devoid of epic power, and his "Asar" as "the most long-winded poem in the language." Long, indeed, it is, but it has been read by many several times with great delight; amongst whom I remember the Crown Prince of Sweden, when a boy, telling me to inform Ling that he had read his "Asar" three times with increased pleasure each time. Who reads "Ossian" now? Even "Paradise Lost" has been pronounced dull, and was held in no account by Newton, as "proving nothing." Southey's "Madoc," beautiful as it is, may be condemned on the same score. In fact, there is scarcely an epic in the world that would stand the brunt of such criticism as that of Mr. Lenström and his *confrère*. In the view of another Swedish critic—"The only fault of the 'Asar' is, that it was written centuries too late,

when the myths, the Sagas, and the faith of the people were extinct; the very elements out of which it sprang, and with the existence of which it can only exist." Mr. Lenström afterwards made the *amende honorable*, in a graceful *palinode*, which I give in prose, written on the title-page of a poem which he presented to Ling:—"The very youth whose critical wantonness assailed the mythic world of the 'Asar' offers to the Asar's poet, in token of repentance, this his first song."*

Had Mrs. Howitt consulted one of her own sex, she might have found, in a little work of Madame de Ehrenström (*Notice sur la Littérature et les Beaux Arts en Suède*) a far different opinion of Ling. "Let us reckon," she says, "amongst the celebrities of our age P. H. Ling, founder and director of gymnastics in Sweden. An enlightened, learned man, a benefactor of his race, full of intrepidity and activity; his deep knowledge of the human body and of anatomy adds to the perfection of his Institution, and never can Sweden sufficiently recognise all she owes to Ling's great art. Original throughout, his quick and brilliant imagination embraces the entire circle of science and art, and is at once his motive faculty and his renown as an author."

As to Mr. Sturzenbecker's elephantine humour on Ling's personal appearance—according to him, "an apparition in a strange, hairy, and rugged

* Swedish National Calendar, 1840.

costume of wolf-skin, cut according to his own peculiar fancy"—I certainly never, during a constant intercourse for ten years with Ling, witnessed any such *lycomorphism*. Whatever Ling did was sufficiently individualized, and his dress was equally removed from the grotesqueness of the buffoon as from the preciseness of the fop.

As far as Mrs. Howitt's own acquaintance of Ling in general goes, it is best exemplified by the fact that she represents a gentleman in London as the practitioner *par excellence* of Ling's medical gymnastics; a man who received his infinitesimal knowledge of the subject from a couple of weeks' attendance at my establishment. Ling's method is, like sounds in music, a science of harmony in motion, and, as I have before stated, is characterised by a peculiarity of application quite unique. The total ignorance that prevails in general on the subject of gymnastics and bodily exercises can only explain attempts similar to those of Mrs. Howitt's *protégé*,* and must be my apology for this and the following digression:—

The language of Ling, in his last petition,† noble and disinterested as it was—when we remember that he left a numerous family en-

* I regret having been obliged to make these severe remarks upon an authoress who has made such considerable efforts in behalf of the Scandinavian literature; and I feel convinced that Mrs. Howitt, in a second edition of her book, will award Ling his full due as one of the literary celebrities of his country.

† See page 37.

irely unprovided for—is highly significant in itself, as proving that out of hundreds of pupils from different professions, under his actual supervision for years, he did not feel himself justified in recommending more than two—Professor Branting and myself—as complete and competent representatives of his system. Others there were, of high eminence and standing in the medical, military, or other professions, for many years his pupils, but from none of these have complaints been raised against Ling's decision, nor has partiality been imputed as a motive. Able as many of them were in their special branches, in Ling's estimation they did not possess that completeness, practical no less than theoretical, with him an indispensable requisite for any genuine successor; and the circumstance that the vacancy at the Central Institution at Stockholm, caused by my coming to England, has not yet, during five years, been filled up, is sufficiently conclusive as to the difficulty of finding, even in Sweden, a thorough gymnasiarch. Judging from what has come under my own notice in this country, it appears to be considered enough to compile, no matter how vaguely and from what sources, a book on the subject of movements, to entitle the editor to attention, and secure him practice as an authority, if not as a master of the art. With equal lack of reason, though perhaps less presumption, might a gentleman in possession of a medical diploma hope for

success as a candidate for the baton of a Costa, or expect the ovation of an Ernst, as the consequence of an inartistic performance on the violin, as that any practitioner devoid of information and experience should dub himself professor, or ape the gait and assume the airs of a genuine disciple of Ling. The presumption, I assert, would be less, and the offence more trivial, inasmuch as Ling's character would not be depreciated, his system damaged in the eyes of the public, and, most of all, the welfare of many patients compromised. At the very least, a course of from three to five years, presupposing a modicum of medical knowledge, is necessary for a man of above an average talent to attain even a superficial knowledge of the system. If the aim of medical gymnastics be the re-establishment of harmony in the body, a previous knowledge of its various parts is not only necessary, as well as an acquaintance with each tone and temper, differing as they do so widely in each individual, but, in addition, the indication of every movement, the modification of action by a varied combination, and, above all, practical skill in the application of the exercises, should be carefully studied and sought for, which can only be obtained under the tuition and supervision of a good master, even for years.

As a gymnasiarch, Ling completely revolutionised the prevalent notions respecting the objects of his art. Extending as he did the area of educa-

tion to the body as well as to the mind, and urging the necessary and intimate reciprocity between the two, he encountered, as might have been expected, the hostility and met the sneers of those to whom this view was novel; but when he insisted that harmony of the body was essential to mental, moral, and religious improvement, his statement was considered positively irrational. In military gymnastics, the martinets were bitterly opposed to him; as he asserted that the time and labour of the usual drill of the recruits would be considerably abridged if a system of gymnastic and educational movement were introduced as a preliminary basis, and no less proved their inefficiency, as long as bayonet-fencing and other means of wielding these weapons were not introduced into the army; and still more when he advanced the opinion that a standing army would be superfluous if national education were based on his principle of gymnastics. In exposing the mistakes of public orators and actors, in not adjusting corporeal movements to the real indications of nature, in harmony with internal emotions, and propounding a new code of æsthetics, he arrayed against him another wide and powerful phalanx of opposition. Still he disdained controversy. "Let them bawl," said he, "I pursue my way notwithstanding. If I am wrong, my cause goes to the ground; if right, it will rise in spite of all their outcry." Last, and

keenest of all, however, was the opposition which the promulgation of his medical theory awoke, not merely from the public, but from the Faculty. In reply to both, Ling thus frankly states his case :—"The champions of gymnastics may blazon forth the fact that thousands of healthy individuals have, by means of corporeal exercises, been rendered abler and stronger than they were—that thousands of invalids, who have resorted in vain to all kinds of medicines, have been restored to health by the agency of gymnastics; all this neither proves what gymnastics are nor what they ought to be, inasmuch as it is retorted, with justice, that millions of healthy persons have become gradually stronger *without* gymnastics, and thousands of patients are restored to health only through chemical agency. This is not the mode of demonstrating the use and the necessity of gymnastics; the causes are rather to be sought, and the idea of gymnastics comprehended, from the consideration of the human organism itself."

Facts are stubborn things, and here we have a body of facts presented before every candid inquirer, proving completely the efficacy of the mechanical agency in therapeutics. In my own practice in London, I have tested its importance in six hundred cases, of which the greater number have been entire cures, and in others more or less relief has been obtained.* For the

* See further, note, page 50.

more vehement professional invectives which he sustained, Ling was at no loss to discover a motive nor anxious to make a reply. Ostensibly instituted for the benefit of mankind, the medical profession has invariably assailed with bitter and relentless hostility any innovation on its practice, or repudiation of its dogmas. I do not merely allude to the reception which homœopathy, hydropathy, mesmerism, phrenology, and other modern scientific discoveries have all along met with. When it is remembered that Jenner was alternately ridiculed and persecuted, that the discovery of Harvey was authoritatively denied, and his professional prosperity seriously endangered, that Franklin's essay was received with shouts of laughter, and Davy at first treated with mixed pity and contempt, we shall cease to wonder why Ling was vilified during his life and abused since his death.* The system which he originated

* Though it is with considerable reluctance, I feel that I cannot, without a dereliction of duty, or disrespect to the memory of Ling, pass over without notice an instance of professional prejudice—I mean the attempt of Baron Gustavus von Düben, a noble of Sweden, and a member of the medical profession, to blacken the memory and asperse the name of Ling, before his real character could be known in this country. It is needless to state that these remarks have reference to the diatribes which appeared in the numbers of the *Edinburgh Monthly Journal*, the London *Medico-Chirurgical Quarterly Review*, and the *Dublin Quarterly Journal* for 1851-52. To prove from whence the blow comes, I need only quote the following note from the last-named journal (p. 422):—“We have received,” says the editor, “along with this pamphlet” (“On the Necessity of Scientific Control over the Gymnastic Central

is so clear, so lucid, and so little *cryptical*, that we must suppose it has given offence by its very simplicity. Though Ling numbered several personal friends and admirers amongst the medical profession, the voice of the majority was decidedly one of misrepresentation, obloquy, and invective, so fierce and incessant, that the very bitterness of the assailant compels us to believe in the strength of the antagonist. Hard words are no arguments, and in spite of the epithets of quack and charlatan, and other equally liberal titles, Ling will one day be acknowledged as a true benefactor of his race. To use an apt saying of Goethe's, "the adversaries of a good cause are like men who strike at the coals of a large fire, they scatter the coals, but propagate the fire."

Institute, etc. ; a Critical Exposition. By D."), "a letter from Baron Gustavus von Düben, in which he avows himself as its author, and states his anxiety that the medical profession in the British islands should not be led astray by the statements of Mr. Georgii, the introducer of kinesipathy into England, as to the countenance given to this quackery by the Swedish Association of Physicians." This is neither the place nor the time for a controversy ; suffice it to say, that the assailant, contrary no doubt to his expectation, has not escaped detection in Sweden, and has already in some papers there received a well-merited correction. My only excuse for touching on the unfair and injurious treatment the memory of my honoured master has received, is the fact that I am one of the two *trustees* he appointed for the advocating and promoting the science he instituted. It was for this very purpose that I left my country ; knowing that if *medical gymnastics* were fairly and fully introduced in England and France, the progress and establishment of Ling's beloved art and science would be the best monument that could be erected to his memory.

I shall not delay to inquire whether medical science be so complete, that no departure from its dogmas is safe; so perfect, that every one of its edicts is true of necessity. The merest tyro in its history is acquainted with the extraordinary clash of opinion on every single disease or its remedies. In therapeutics, for instance, hear the late Dr. Pereira, in his *Materia Medica*, upon opium and mercury:—"Several physicians," says he, "as Dr. John Murray and Dr. Anthony Tod Thomson, consider opium to be primarily *stimulant*; some, as Drs. Cullen and Barbier, regard it as *sedative*. One, viz., Dr. Mayer, as *both*, that it is a *stimulant* to the nerves and circulatory system, but a *sedative* to the muscles and digestive organs; another, viz., Orfila, regards it as *neither*; while others, as Müller, call it *alterative*. Again, mercury is, by several writers, as Drs. Cullen, Young, Chapman, and Eberle, placed in the class of *sialagogues*; by many, as A. T. Thomson, Edwards, Vavasseur, Trousseau, and Pidoux, among *excitants*; by some, as Conradi, Bertele, and Horn, it is considered to be a *sedative*; by one, Dr. Wilson Philip, to be *stimulant* in small doses, and *sedative* in large ones; by some, as Dr. John Murray, it is placed among *tonics*; by another, viz., Vogt, among the *resolventia alterantia*; by one, viz., Sundelin, among the *liquefacients*; by the followers of Broussais, as Begin, among *revulsives*; by the Italians, as

Giaccomini, among *counter-stimulants*, or hyposthenics; by others, as Barbier, among the *incertæ sedes*."

Even the chief authorities are dubious themselves as to the infallibility of their art. "The science of medicine," says Sir Astley Cooper, "is founded upon conjecture, and improved by murder." Abernethy, in his Lectures, asserts "there has been a great increase of medical men of late years, but, upon my life, diseases have increased in proportion." Dr. Gregory affirms that "medical doctrines are little better than stark-staring absurdities," etc. It may be pleaded, with some show of justice, that these expressions are rather acknowledgments of the insufficiency of human knowledge, in general, in the most difficult and most responsible of all arts, the cure of diseases, and on this account the following anecdote is not *mal-à-propos*. "A person who is so great an anatomist as you," said a lady to the celebrated Dr. Petit, "must surely be able to cure all diseases." "You are mistaken, madam," he replied; "we doctors are like the *commis-sionnaires* of Paris, they know all the streets, but they are ignorant of what passes within the houses."

On the other hand, while the great masters in anatomy and medical science are unanimous in their opinions as to the benefits of exercise in general, it seems strange that so little sympathy

should be excited in favour of exercise, when adjusted and harmonized by Ling in particular. Thus Hippocrates asserts that "exercise gives strength and firmness to the body and vigour to the mind;" and Galen says that "if the lower extremities are kept warm by action, a free circulation is produced throughout the body;" and Cheyne is of opinion that there is not one thing more generally approved of and recommended by all physicians, for the relief of chronic complaints, than exercise; and, more remarkable still, the great Sydenham—"Our great misery," says he, "is that we forsook long ago our ancient and skilful guides, Hippocrates and Sanctorius, who so strongly recommend daily exercises for the removal and prevention of *chronic* complaints;" and not different was the last testimony of this great master of the art. "I am content to die," said he, "since I leave behind me three great physicians," and as those around him bent closer to catch his words, he uttered only the significant and compendious sentence, "*air, water, and exercise.*"

A catalogue of opinions might be appended, corroborated by names as celebrated as various in time, all advocating the advantages of exercise. Notwithstanding, according to rash objectors, whilst exercise is rude and unscientific, it is surely of advantage; but no sooner is a plan of scientific application and arrangement made, than

a result indubitably counter to health is the consequence.

However, each day confirms the fact of a return to and a recognition of the great precept of a hygienic mode of cure in disease, according to the very laws whereby the organism itself lives and exists. I readily admit that there is no profession wherein individuals more distinguished and noble are to be found than in the medical body, nowhere instances of learning and skill combined with loftier benevolence and greater self-sacrifice. But corporations never take the initiative in reform, and always are reluctant to surrender the privileges of authority. As Lamar-tine aptly observes, "heroic actions are the offspring of the heart, and that is what parties never possess, composed as they are of so many interests and ambitions ; a corporation, in fact, is only selfishness with the faculty of immortality."

A passing glance at Ling as a gymnasiarch, and we have done. Let it be remembered that he must not be judged partially. Though each subdivision of his science is complete in itself, it is maimed and defective when severed, or regarded without reference to the whole. Ling's conception of a gymnasiarch was not merely that of a fencing-master, one skilled in the intricacies of drill and posture, not simply of a pathologist, adroit in all the varieties of rubbings, shampoosings, and such like manipulations, nor yet of a mere orchestric

artist, though he understand all the possibilities of figure and the formularies of grace. These are only rude *embrya* of a rational system of gymnastics, embracing the entire range of *kinesiology* and the principles of an accurate and harmonious development of the human body. To eliminate the latent capacities of the organism, to repress what is abnormal, to adjust what is disturbed—in a word, to adapt the powers of each individual constitution to the necessities of its vocation by well-defined and anatomically-determined movements, to establish harmony in form and motion, beauty, healthfulness, and manliness—so that the result should be *mens sana in corpore sano*—these were the aims that Ling endeavoured and was admirably fitted to carry out. As a pedagogist, it was his care to graduate each exercise to suit the capacity of the feeblest as well as the strongest, and, as regards motion, make them, by a series of educational movements, independent of external circumstances, thereby rendering the body a willing and obedient instrument of the soul. The founder of an entire new theory, and a school of arms, in which the combined principles of animal mechanics and those for the different manual weapons had been mathematically examined and defined, he was well qualified, by his thorough mastery of the art itself, to direct the pupil to the necessary requisites for success in a close encounter—presence

of mind, velocity of motion, economy of effort, keenness of eye, and correctness of aim—and thus to make his will supreme above that of his antagonist.

In æsthetic gymnastics his poetic faculty had a large field for development, and it is but just to mention that here, as in the other branches of his system, his great acquirements were remarkably displayed, inasmuch as having theoretically traced the laws, he was the first practically to demonstrate their correctness in the most admirable and harmonious action. From his artistic judgment and his familiarity with ancient Norse mythology he inspired many of his countrymen with ideas and designs. Fogelberg and Byström, the sculptors, Sandberg, Breda, Wahlbom, painters, etc., were all intimately connected with Ling, and admirers of the mode in which he illustrated thoughts and ideas through symmetric motions. As a pathologist, it was his study to apply the mechanical agency as a healing instrument, in cases even where all other means had failed; ever ready with new formulæ of movements, directed to tonify where action was languid, or to soothe and mitigate where irritation was present; ever keeping in view the re-establishment of harmony in form and action of the vital machinery, through the instrumentality of analytic movements.

His eye quick and keen to detect the slightest

deviation from a given type or formula of movement ; his word of command clear, distinct, so as to be heard amid the hubbub of hundreds, and encouraging, so as to enliven to multifarious efforts ; his hand obeying the most delicate *nuances* of touch, as a manipulatory agent in the execution of his movements, justly termed "the essence of exercises ;" and not least his never-ceasing faculty of invention, suggesting new therapeutical resources in an inexhaustible variety of motions, an instinct that remained, and which procured for himself no little alleviation and relief during his illness, up to the very last.

It has been observed, and the observation is not devoid of truth, that Ling in the latter part of his life evinced a greater partiality for the medico-therapeutical branch of his system ; but in consequence of having for so many years, and with comparatively small results, fought against the indolent and dogged prejudices of his age, as respects the adoption of his pedagogic and military gymnastics, it was not unnatural that he thenceforward threw heart and soul into this new field of research.* If he succeeded in establishing the fact that chronic diseases were capable of cure, in a comparatively short

* It was not till 1836 that gymnastics and bayonet-fencing were generally introduced in the Swedish army and navy, and a yearly course for the information of officers as instructors was established. See further, note, page 50.

time, by a certain *modus operandi* in the application of active and passive movements, he not only proved beyond a doubt the therapeutical value of motion (mechanical agency), but demonstrated also the importance of gymnastics as an educational and hygienic apparatus, and, as an indispensable consequence, the possession of anatomical and physiological knowledge as the basis for its practical application. Success assuredly he did obtain; not only during a period of more than thirty years did he himself confirm his theories from actual observation, thereby rescuing some thousands from chronic suffering of the most varied kind and degree, but Professor Branting, from the numerous opportunities he has had for many years, has still further verified the efficacy of Ling's specific movements, and enlarged and developed this new healing instrument, which, in the hands of many practitioners of the present day, has become one of the acknowledged restorative agencies.

Ling was not a member of the medical profession, as some have asserted, and as might have been supposed from an *à priori* indication in his system and writings. That he was no novice in the fundamental principles and preliminaries of medical science is plain, not only from the true anatomical character of his movements, from his most successful application of the method he introduced as a curative, and from the many pro-

positions he evolved from his observations on the action of his movements. He was a gymnasiarch, and as such not satisfied in opening a new page in medical science—the *mechanic medicine*; he inscribed his name on it in thousands of new motorial operations, all bearing the character of most careful and philosophic investigation; and he originated a new practical science, claiming support and encouragement, and the same protection for its practitioners as for other liberal professions. For himself, he was far from claiming infallibility or immunity from error, and this was a repeated saying of his—"I have always wished to know everything, and to be nothing."

Considered as a head master or principal of the school he had established, he was severe, nay perhaps despotic, yet exercising at the same time a paternal influence over his pupils and followers. Not the slightest fault passed unnoticed or unremarked. Errors in order and discipline, or inaccuracies in time, he reprobated most strongly; and with the view of enforcing these principles, he selected as his assistants or teachers at his Institution, for the most part, officers of the Swedish army. Notwithstanding, his character lacked not more pleasing and encouraging traits. His genius, his simplicity, his disinterestedness and benevolence were features attractive to all who came within the reach of his intimacy. He was generous even to a fault, and ever ready

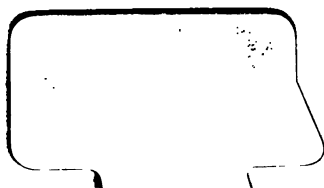
to forward the interest and succour the needs of every one, especially when exhibiting any marks of talent. By his contemporaries at large he was completely misunderstood, living as he did in a world peopled with the fanciful imagery of centuries long extinct, or indulging in visions of a future too dim or too hopeful for common vulgar apprehension. The criticisms showered upon him, though apparently harmless, provoking no rejoinder, were not unfelt, as we gather from the following expressions:—"I declare," says he, "I have lived by the sweat of my brow. Few excavators have had a harder day's work. I was not destined to labour with my arms, but with my brain, though the world seems to think I am only fit to be a mere working-machine, and have sneered at everything which exhibits me in a different light. Still, worm as I am, I know that by the grace of God I have, in more than one respect, influenced the spiritual advancement of my country and my race. It is true I have received little reward, but in this respect I am not alone; and I am convinced I have followed the inspiration of a power higher than my own."

Taking into account the long course of struggles through which Ling passed, such a career is most fittingly concluded by sentiments embodied in the following annotation, found, like the former, on some scraps of paper, evidently intended

as an autobiographical record: — “ Enemies, stand if you can on my grave, and, with hand on your heart, swear that your breast beats more truly for your country’s weal than mine! Swear that you are equal to greater self-sacrifices than I am! Be your name and your motives what they may, my spirit gives you the welcome of peace! Yes, peace be with you!”

Such was Ling. In his character there was a real correspondence of action, aim, singleness of heart, and tenacity of effort. Time is a great compensator; if his lifetime was stormy, if the award of his labour has been as yet niggard, I feel convinced that his doctrine will one day stand forth as a fixed star on the horizon of knowledge. It may not be till after a course of years that it becomes familiar to our vision; it may be still hidden for a time behind the nebulæ of ignorance and prejudice, but sooner or later it will emerge and diffuse its beneficent light over the world. In Ling’s own words—“ truth is the symbol of the eternal, it has immunity from time.”

THE END.



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